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The T.C. Report: Change at Denison referendum

Denison University

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CHANGE AT DENISON

Prepared for the Trustees, Administration, Faculty and Students

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To preface this report, we of T. C. , the "Time for Change" committee, feel obligated to:

1. Explain the purpose of the referendum we initiated on May 14, 1968,
2. Explain the objectives of this report, and
3. Explain the nature of our organization--why we formed, what we believe is important, and what we believe should be improved at Denison.

In the past year Denison has become acutely aware of the racial tensions within our country. This American crisis is the greatest internal crisis which our country now faces. On a limited scale this crisis exists at Denison. There have been several attempts to alleviate the pressure that exists between the races at Denison; however, it would be naive to assume that the problem has been solved. This certainly could not be the case if three Negro students feel that they must transfer to another campus due to their lack of success in trying to stress the urgency of change on the Denison campus. The Denison community has not provided an adequate social atmosphere for the Negro students. In essence we have contributed to the continuation of segregation. If Denison envisions its students' future as "a life based upon... the dignity of man... unlimited by racial, cultural, religious, or economic barriers" as stated in the Statement of Objectives, then we must provide an atmosphere in which the underprivileged and middle class may live together free of social discrimination. If we are to integrate successfully the present efforts toward that end by the administration, faculty and student body must be intensified.

However, T. C. believes that some progress has been made. The Black Culture course has been an important addition to the curriculum, and we hope that more courses of this nature will be developed, because we believe that courses concerning various facets of modern culture are necessary in preparing a person for interaction with people from different backgrounds and different environments. Although these courses may provide valuable insights, they cannot provide a workable experience with people of different cultural backgrounds. For this reason T. C. 's proposals concerning diversification are instrumental in developing a community of various class and educational backgrounds.

The organization known as T. C. --"A Time for Change"--grew from increasing frustrations on the part of the students over racial tensions at Denison. The objective of the referendum which the committee circulated was to allow the students to express their views and desires regarding the need for change through channels independent of current student organizations, i. e. DCGA, fraternities, sororities, and DCA. We believe that by creating such a channel the student body can possibly become more united and dedicated to the betterment of Denison. From the overwhelming participation in the referendum (13% greater response than the last DCGA referendum) we believe that the students do desire change but that they have reservations about how the change is to be brought about. In order to eliminate any doubt or apprehension concerning our future plans we wish to state that we have no desire to create unnecessary tension in the Denison community by resorting to violence. It is our express desire to move Denison forward without creating a Columbia or a Berkeley. We recognize that the administration, Board of Trustees, and faculty are the authorities directing the school's progress. We only hope that our knowledge gained through this referendum and any other future attempts to gain student sentiment can

assist the proper authorities in reaching a final judgement as to the future of Denison.

THE PROPOSALS AND WHAT THEY MEAN

T. C. , on the night of May 13 held a mass meeting of about 150 students to draw up a list of grievances. A committee of interested students was formed to present to the student body a referendum. For the referendum, the committee listed 14 points to be voted on by students the next day. The following is an explanation of the proposals and why the committee thought them important.

Proposal #1: The Board of Trustees of Denison University commit the necessary funds to recruit and support, both academically and socially 50 additional Black students for the academic year 1969-70, and thereafter.

This proposal is a reiteration of the faculty's recommendation to recruit more Negro students for Denison. We changed the faculty's statement, "A significantly increased number of Black students," to "50 additional Black students," only because we believe that the wording of the faculty's statement was vague. We understand that 50 is an arbitrary number that may be difficult to meet; however, we propose this to impress upon the proper authorities the need for a large increase in the Negro enrollment in order to begin meaningful educational integration. Due to present admission practices, and due to active discrimination now practiced at Denison the 13 Negroes presently enrolled are having a difficult time adjusting. This is unfair to the students and is depriving the white Denison student of a truly diversified educational experience.

Proposal #2: In addition to the above, the Board of Trustees commit the necessary funds to recruit and support, academically and socially, a significantly increased number of foreign and underprivileged students for the academic year 1969-70.

Inherent in this proposal is the desire to integrate this campus entirely by increasing the scope of the student body beyond Negroes and middle class whites thus bringing about a more complete integration. This would call for a recruitment program adequately financed, to seek out underprivileged students, in areas where the admissions department does not presently recruit.

Proposal #3: The Board of Trustees increase present available funds for recruitment of black, foreign and underprivileged students.

The committee felt that the present allotment of \$500 for the Student Recruiting Committee is not sufficient. It could not cover the students' expenses--students who have sacrificed their time to recruit for Denison. Therefore we asked for an increase in funds for the recruiting committee.

Proposal #4: Sufficient funds be allotted for tutorial programs for any students who need help adjusting to the academic environment as an essential step towards achieving a more diverse student body by the academic year 1969-70 and thereafter.

From the studies at Oberlin it was found that some underprivileged students with

minority backgrounds were not sufficiently prepared in high school for college but had the ability to do the work. Therefore, we propose that a tutorial program be developed to alleviate any academic deficiency, e. g. , verbal facility, that any incoming student might have.

Proposal #5: Sufficient funds be allotted for the establishment of a summer program at Denison for underprivileged junior and senior high school students with intellectual potential by the summer of 1969, as an institutional commitment to a community problem.

The nature of this proposal is such that by establishing a summer program for underprivileged high school students (similar to "Upward Bound") the college would be taking necessary steps toward integration of races and social classes. The purpose of this program is to increase the educational experience of underprivileged high school students with the desire and ability to learn. Attempts should be made to secure the necessary funds for the institution of such a program.

Proposal #6: There be an increase in faculty control of the admissions policy.

This proposal arose from the feeling by T. C. that the faculty was interested in helping the administration diversify the Denison student body. With more faculty involvement in the admissions department we felt that the desired diversification could be better achieved by means of a different administrative perspective.

Therefore, in reference to this proposal T. C. suggests the possibility of establishing a group of interested faculty with the responsibility for interviewing prospective Denison students. Accordingly, each faculty volunteer would allow for two open hours in his weekly schedule in which he would be free to interview high school students. This plan would call for twenty-five faculty members working throughout the week. The purpose of this program is such that each prospective student would receive a broader impression of Denison. In order not to dilute the authority of the Admissions Director, each faculty member would submit to the Admission Department a written report of the interview and his reaction to the student. The Admissions Department would then use this report in evaluating the student at a later date.

In the final decision as to acceptance or rejection of all students whose qualifications are in doubt, it is the earnest desire of T. C. that the Board of Trustees consider allowing the faculty to select representatives who would work with the Director of Admissions in selecting a freshman class from these applications.

Proposal #7: The immediate appointment of a black administrator to work in the admissions department to develop the programs necessary to achieve the goals previously stated.

This proposal grew from the belief that a qualified Negro administrator would be beneficial in (a) working with the recruitment teams and with the admissions department since he might be better qualified to understand the problems of both; and (b) in working with the suggested increase of underprivileged students at Denison since he might be better qualified to understand their cultural background.

Proposal #8: That efforts to hire qualified black professors should be continued and extended.

T.C. believes that Negro professors would be necessary in order to integrate Denison successfully.

Proposal #9: The administration take a stand condemning any organization which fails to produce a statement from both the national and the local chapters that they have no discriminatory clauses based on race, creed or color and that the administration exert the power to cancel the charter of those organizations which fail to comply.

Proposal #10: In addition, that the administration cancel the charter of any organization found to be practicing discrimination on the basis of race, creed or color.

T.C. believed that as long as there were any Greek organizations on campus that discriminated on the basis of race, creed, or color, then integration at Denison would never be accomplished. The necessary step then, as we see it, is to seek a statement from the administration condemning any Greek organization which discriminated on the basis of race, creed, or color. We also believe that if a Greek organization would discriminate on the basis of race, creed, or color, the university should revoke their charter. We realize that discrimination is the only functional means of selection in the Greek system and we do not wish to change this. We believe, however, selection on the superficial basis of race, creed, or color to be contrary to the dignity of Man as stated in the Denison Statement of Objectives.

Proposal #11: The administration finance an adequate social program independent of the Greek system in order to provide an all-school social atmosphere.

We feel that the current DCGA social program is totally inadequate. At present it does little to provide an interesting or enjoyable social program. Consequently, changes are necessary.

Proposal #12: The Board of Trustees be confronted with the proposal for the legalization of the possession and consumption of alcohol on the Denison campus in accordance with the state laws of Ohio.

Proposal #13: The Board of Trustees and Administration recognize the right of men students to decide University policy concerning the presence of women in men's living quarters.

These proposals were placed on the ballot as a result of the Mass Meeting May 13. They were felt to be legitimate concerns, and consistent with the growing belief in student responsibility for their personal lives.

Proposal #14: The right for a group of students to meet with the Board of Trustees at their May 31st meeting to make them aware of the changes we deem absolutely necessary for Denison to become the kind of institution described in its statement of objectives.

By this proposal we hope that the Board of Trustees would establish a precedent of allowing students to meet with them at the Board's discretion. We hope to establish a communication channel so that students can voice their opinion on the issues facing Denison to the primary governing body of this University.

STUDENT REACTIONS: THE TRENDS

T. C. feels an obligation to present a summary of all opinions expressed on the questionnaires: A number of people complained about the timing of the poll, but we felt that it was absolutely necessary in light of the whole racial question in our time. Very few people showed anti-Negro sentiment or antipathy to the poll.

130 students wrote they were in favor of integration, but were opposed to a number of our specific proposals, and were fearful that there might be campus demonstrations or riots. This group showed a fear of immediate or even accelerated change. There was great apprehension that the influx of Negro and underprivileged students would lower the academic standards of Denison and their personal academic status both here and elsewhere. Consequently, they repeatedly stressed the importance of accepting only "qualified" Negro students. Another question evident in the comments dealt with the proposed sources of funds for the programs. The general feeling was that tuition should not be increased to provide for the additional expenditures. Therefore, they felt that another source of income must be found.

Another common sentiment was that the University had no right to "force" the fraternities and sororities to integrate. Related to this feeling was the fear that there might be discrimination against the whites. It was felt that the admission of unqualified Negro students would deny a qualified white student an opportunity for a Denison education.

80 students questioned T. C. 's authority to deal with these matters. They felt that the committee's actions, including the referendum, were ill-timed, immature, and generally presumptuous. A few even requested that the students of the committee transfer to Columbia or Berkeley where they might be more effective and less dangerous.

Some students felt that the committee had no right to question the authority of the administration since, as they pointed out, our enrollment in Denison is a privilege, not a right.

Finally, several students questioned our right to meet with the Board of Trustees, because we were not an "official" organization representing the student body.

POSITIVE REACTION:

Although the comments were generally negative, the statistical results of the

referendum proved to be encouraging. They seemed to indicate that our actions as well as the proposals do have meaning. We have pointed out above some of the general reactions for and against the referendum. We will now use these reactions to question the student's view of himself and the Denison community; then we will attempt to answer these questions on the basis of the results of the referendum and our knowledge of the Denison community.

1. Is the Denison student informed as to the governmental organizations on campus, their functions and accomplishments?

We found that the Denison student was aware of the efforts being made by the faculty, student and administration committees to change Denison; however, most of their information was incomplete or not accurate. For example, 57 students were opposed to the recruitment of Negro students because they thought Denison might recruit Negroes exclusively; they did not know that we already do recruit whites.

2. Does the response to this referendum indicate strong student interest for or against the issues of racial integration and student unity?

The statistical analysis would indicate strong sympathy for these issues. However, the 319 written comments indicate only a vague commitment to these issues. Therefore, we conclude that many students desire racial integration and increased student responsibilities, but they are not sure of the justifiable means necessary to accomplish these ends. 130 students wrote that they favored the proposals on the referendum but that T. C. 's tactics alienated them.

3. Do Denison students feel that one of the problems of discrimination lies in the fraternity-sorority system? If so, who must change it--the administration or the students themselves?

In written comments there were two reactions to referendum statements #9 and #10. 19 out of 35 respondees felt by forcing fraternities and sororities to accept non-discriminatory clauses and practices, the administration would be demanding false change. They also felt that natural change could only come when fraternity and sorority members initiated change from within the system. In essence they felt that fraternities and sororities are autonomous and should not be told what to do.

These comments merit serious reflection. Fraternities and sororities are not private organizations for they are under the jurisdiction of Denison University policies (i. e. drinking and women in fraternities, etc.) Their members are represented on the governing bodies of men's and women's Judicial Councils. On the issue of discriminatory policy, therefore, fraternities and sororities must abide by University policy, whatever that policy might be. If fraternities and sororities are allowed to exist on any one issue outside of University policy, all remaining policies can be called into question. Surely it is advantageous to keep the Greek system under University jurisdiction so that this system may continue to grow with and be an integral part of the Denison community.

Eleven of the 35 respondees felt that because discrimination was the only functional

means of selection in the Greek system a charge of discrimination based on race, creed, and color would be difficult to prove.

How will racial discrimination be proved? The burden of proof for a charge of discrimination will fall upon the accuser and not the accused. The administration will not be put into the role of a policeman searching for violations. Rather, what is desired is that there be an outlet to the administration for either: 1) Greek members who wish to press charges of discrimination against a local fraternity or sorority or a national chapter; 2) a Greek chapter or chapters who desire administrative support in challenging national Greek policies; and 3) Negroes who wish to press charges of discrimination. It is not important that the administration "get a certain fraternity or sorority" but that frustrated and/or concerned and/or upset students can have someone to turn to, someone to listen and with enough experience to channel the emotions and energies into constructive directions. Incidents at Columbia University should be evidence enough that such contacts are necessary.

4. Do Denison students want a change, or do they want to keep Denison as it presently is? If they want change, how is it to be brought about?

Although there were random comments in which students stated they felt that Denison should not be changed because change would destroy its function as a small liberal arts college, the statistical results would indicate that the majority of students feel that Denison must change with the times but only if it were orderly change. Necessity or orderly change through existing channels reveals a desire for caution, precipitated possibly by the results of student power movement in other Universities. In general, the students again appear to be ambivalent about the speed of change.

5. Is the Denison student really apathetic, or is he confused by the complexity of the problems?

The 1017 votes tabulated would suggest that the Denison student is not apathetic; however, the written reaction implies that the Denison student is:

- a. conservative
- b. possibly prejudiced
- c. hesitant about getting involved.

The student is quick to react, but cautious in approaching anything new. T.C. is encouraged by the unprecedented turnout for a referendum initiated by an organization independent of the existing governmental bodies. Students are ready for change if it is brought about by the efforts of the Board of Trustees, the faculty, existing student organizations, or the administration.

6. Would accepting 50 Negroes by the year 1969-70 mean a lowering of academic standards and entrance requirements? If so, how would the Denison student react?

It is the opinion of T. C. that the present admissions criteria for the prospective Denison student are invalid when applied to members of the underprivileged minorities. A faculty member of the Admissions Committee said that the primary criterion for acceptance of half the freshman class is a total score above 1200 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Sociological and psychological research have proved that this test is oriented toward a white middle class suburban high school student. Therefore, we think that it is unfair to judge a student with a different cultural background by the same standards that would be used with a white middle class student. Alternative criteria must be relied upon in considering prospective students whose backgrounds are not white middle class. We understand that at present other criteria are being used by the Admissions Department; the students, however, seem unaware of this. 10% felt that the admission of fifty additional Negro and underprivileged students would necessitate a lowering of both entrance requirements and academic standards. These 108 students insisted that an additional Negro and underprivileged students must be "qualified." We believe, therefore, that the Admissions Committee should formulate entrance requirements for underprivileged minority students, and by so doing, eliminate the question of compromising admissions standards.

7. What is our recruitment proposal? Is it acceptable to the student body?

T. C. proposes that the Board of Trustees consider University financing of an adequate recruiting program, to be operated by the student recruitment committee. Such recruiting would be conducted in localities currently ignored by the Admissions Office. T. C., because of the positive results achieved by student recruiters in the past year, believes that more Denison students should be utilized in this capacity. This would mean providing adequate funds so that student recruiters could seek able students in urban ghettos, and in rural areas, such as Appalachia and Indian reservations. We feel that the current amount provided for this purpose (\$500.00) is inadequate. The poll showed that fifty-seven students believed our efforts were to be limited to Negroes. This is not the case, as we have pointed out. However, the statistical results of the referendum indicate that the proposal is favored by two-thirds of the voters, a fact which must be considered in the decision.

8. By accepting an increased number of Negro students, would Denison be discriminating against whites?

The acceptance of fifty additional Negroes and underprivileged students into each class would necessitate one of two things: either denying admission to fifty qualified middle class white students, or enlarging each incoming class by fifty. Since the board and the administration have already stated that two thousand is the optimum number of students within the current facilities, we feel that the former plan of action is more logical. Admittedly there is a certain amount of discrimination inherent in the plan, but it is discrimination against the status quo. We realize that the college experience is more accessible to the white middle class than it is to the economically disabled and that there are still many colleges that would rather accept white middle class students than any minority representatives. However, we feel that without a diversified student body, a genuine liberal arts education is impossible to achieve, for a large part of education is learning to live with people different from yourself.

9. Does Denison need an improved all school social program?

The statistical results on this proposal indicate a strong sentiment (79%) in favor of a social program independent of the Greek system. A random sampling of approximately one fourth of the voters showed that 71% of them were affiliated. From this statistic and the fact that the number favoring the proposal outnumbered the total number of unaffiliated students on campus, we conclude that there is indeed a need for such a program. There were a few students (26) who commented that such a program should come through current student channels rather than from the administration. They also complained, however, that the DCGA social program is both inadequate and poorly operated. Therefore, we suggest a close study of the current program, with suggestions for making it a valuable facet of the Denison community.)

10. What was student reaction concerning legalizing drinking and permission for women to enter men's rooms?

These two proposals received the most attention from the voters; the response was affirmative. (72% favored University compliance with the Ohio State liquor laws only, while 80% felt that women should have the freedom to enter men's rooms.) Our top priority, of course, goes to those issues dealing directly with integration. However, these proposals were felt to be valid during the mass meeting, and we believe that it would have been unfair not to include them. They, therefore, must be regarded as legitimate campus issues to be resolved in the near future.

11. Would an increase of underprivileged students in the enrollment of Denison be beneficial to the present community?

This final issue is the crux of the whole large issue of integration. Basically, the purpose of integration must be to create at Denison an atmosphere in which people of different races, creeds, colors, and cultural backgrounds will live and learn together. Such an atmosphere would be beneficial to all involved. We hope that such an environment could assure each Denisonian an education based on experience as well as theory.

T. C. (TIME FOR CHANGE) REFERENDUM

If you toss this referendum in the waste basket, you are throwing away your right to a voice in what goes on in your school. Your opinion is vitally needed on the following. A committee is going to present these demands to the administration and a knowledge of the sentiment of the student body is needed. This referendum is a result of a Mass Meeting of students held last night, May 13, in Slayter Auditorium.

These proposals are consistent with the stated objectives of this college as published in the Bulletin. Action should be taken now concerning these proposals, and the administration should make a prompt public response.

WE REQUEST AND URGE:

1. The Board of Trustees of Denison University commit the necessary funds to recruit and support, both academically and socially, 50 additional black students for the academic year 1969-70, and thereafter.

YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. In addition to the above, the Board of Trustees commit the necessary funds to recruit and support, academically and socially, a significantly increased number of foreign and underprivileged students for the academic year 1969-70.

YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. The Board of Trustees increase present available funds for the recruitment of black, foreign, and underprivileged students.

YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Sufficient funds be allotted for tutorial programs for any students who need help adjusting to the academic environment as an essential step towards achieving a more diverse student body by the academic year 1969-70 and thereafter.

YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Sufficient funds be allotted for the establishment of a summer program at Denison for underprivileged junior and senior high school students with intellectual potential by the summer of 1969, as an institutional commitment to a community problem.

YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. There be an increase in faculty control of the admissions policy.

YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. The immediate appointment of a black administrator to work in the admissions department to develop the programs necessary to achieve the goals previously stated.

YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. That efforts to hire qualified black professors should be continued and extended.

YES	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9. The administration take a stand condemning any organization which fails to produce a statement from both the national and the local chapters that they have no discriminatory clauses based on race, creed or color and that the administration exert the power to cancel the charter of those organizations which fail to comply.

YES NO
☐ ☐

10. In addition, that the administration cancel the charter of any organization found to be practicing discrimination on the basis of race, creed or color.

YES NO
☐ ☐

11. The administration finance an adequate social program independent of the Greek system in order to provide an all-school social atmosphere.

YES NO
☐ ☐

12. The Board of Trustees be confronted with the proposal of the legalization of the possession and consumption of alcohol on the Denison campus in accordance with the state laws of Ohio.

YES NO
☐ ☐

13. The Board of Trustees and Administration recognize the right of men students to decide University policy concerning the presence of women in men's living quarters.

YES NO
☐ ☐

14. The right for a group of students to meet with the Board of Trustees at their May 31st meeting to make them aware of the changes we deem absolutely necessary for Denison to become the kind of institution described in its statement of objectives.

YES NO
☐ ☐

COMMENTS:

STATISTICAL RESULTS OF THE REFERENDUM

PROPOSALS	YES	NO	OVERQUALIFIED OR UNDECIDED
1.	500	475	42
2.	622	358	37
3.	667	297	53
4.	647	328	42
5.	671	294	53
6.	571	357	89
7.	453	496	68
8.	831	155	31
9.	540	429	48
10.	526	422	69
11.	790	175	52
12.	716	245	56
13.	803	161	48
14.	785	155	77